

Directions:

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text in the space provided. The text is provided for you to mark, color, and highlight things you find interesting and important. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

Background:

Much has transpired between Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and his second letter. It is important, yet difficult, to reconstruct the timeline of events. Second Corinthians contains an emotional appeal to the Corinthian church. What has happened since the first letter to warrant such an emotional, personal response? What follows is a general timeline of the events that have transpired between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. This timeline is by no means firm or absolute. Rather, this is a general sketch potentially reconstructing what has occurred.

1. In two letters, a previous letter now lost (1 Cor. 5:9-13) and 1 Corinthians, Paul challenged important persons in the community for their ethical misbehavior and their association with idolatry. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth from Ephesus with 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11). After they received 1 Corinthians, the Christians at Corinth probably rectified most of the practical abuses for which Paul had censured them in his letter. For example, he says nothing further in 2 Corinthians about abuse of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34) or about litigation among Christians (1 Cor 6:1-8).

2. In spite of this and because of the arrival of Judaizing intruders from Palestine (2 Cor 11:4, 22), conditions in the church at Corinth deteriorated. Because of Paul's bold rebukes in 1 Corinthians, it seems many Corinthians accepted the Judaizers. They counterattacked by impugning Paul's motives, methods, and person to undermine his authority in the church.

3. Paul has to change his plans for what he sketched out in 1 Corinthians 16:5-9. He intended to come to them after passing through Macedonia and perhaps spend the winter with them. Instead, this deteriorating situation necessitated Paul's "painful visit" (Ephesus-Corinth-Ephesus; see 7.a. below) (see 2 Cor 1:23; 2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1, 2). During this visit Paul was the object of an attack by someone in the community (2 Cor 2:5-8,10; 7:11-12), and no one from the Corinthian congregation took up his defense. Paul leaves Corinth, apparently returning to Ephesus rather than going on to Macedonia as previously planned.

4. Paul determines to go to Macedonia from Ephesus rather than make another visit to Corinth (1:23), Titus was sent from Ephesus to Corinth with the "severe letter" (see 7.b. below), in which Paul called for the punishment of the wrongdoer (2 Cor 2:3, 4, 6, 9; 7:8, 12). In addition, Paul instructed Titus to organize the collection for the saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:6a), which had gone by default since the Palestinian interlopers had arrived and had begun to derive their support from the church (cf. 2 Cor 11:7-12, 20; 12:14). This change of plans causes more criticism against Paul (1:15-2:4). Some see 1 Corinthians as the "severe letter."

5. Titus delivers the "severe letter" to the Corinthians. He stayed to insure their repentance, to cement their renewed commitment to Paul, and to rejuvenate their dedication to the collection for the poor of the saints in Jerusalem. Paul had assured Titus of his confidence in the Corinthians' positive response to the letter (7:14) and expected to hear some word from Titus about the Corinthians' response to his letter.

6. Paul left Ephesus shortly after the Demetrius riot (Acts 19:23-20:1), began evangelism in Troas (or the Troad) (2 Cor 2:12, 13), and then suffered his "affliction in Asia" (2 Cor 1:8-11). Paul crossed to Macedonia (2 Cor 2:13; 7:5) and engaged in pastoral activity (Acts 20:1,2) while organizing the collection in the Macedonian churches (2 Cor 8:1-4; 9:2). Titus was to meet Paul in Troas (2:12-13). He had an evangelistic opportunity there, but his nagging worries about the situation in Corinth caused him to leave this work. Presumably, when Paul realized that Titus was not on the last boat of the season (now autumn), he assumed that Titus would now have to travel by land through Macedonia. Paul left for Macedonia in hopes of meeting Titus there. (2 Cor 2:12, 13; 7:5, 6).

7. Titus arrived in Macedonia with his welcome report of the Corinthians' responsiveness to the "severe letter" (2 Cor 7:5-16). His expression of joy in chapter 7 indicates that the severe letter and Titus's visit had repaired the breach. Paul's pastoral work in Macedonia continued and then gave place to pioneer evangelism along the Egnatian Road and probably in Illyricum (Rom 15:19-21). Some believe Paul began writing 2 Corinthians before Titus's arrival. Chapter 7 records the arrival and the rest of the letter deals with issue in the church that Titus has reported to Paul.

8. Paul responded by writing 2 Corinthians and sending Titus back with two brothers to complete the collection (8:6, 17-18, 22). Paul spends time in this letter defending his activity as an apostle and makes a fervent appeal for the Corinthians to be receptive to him again. Their affection for him, however, has been alienated by the presence of boastful rivals, and he is still concerned that their former openness to him has diminished (6:13; 7:2). Further, there are some who have come into Corinth who apparently came off as "superapostles" who were more spiritual, eloquent, and compelling than Paul (11:5, 23; 12:11). These are some of the problems that Paul must confront in 2 Corinthians.

10. Paul spent three months in Greece, primarily in Corinth (Acts 20:2-3) before leaving for Jerusalem with the collection. During this time he wrote Romans. The letter to the Romans notes that the Achaians contributed to the relief effort (Romans 15:26), but the warning appears to be colored by this conflict in Corinth.

"I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive." (Romans 16:17–18 ESV)

— Timeline is a synthesis from the following sources:
Expositor's Bible Commentary by Murray J. Harris, New American Commentary by David E. Garland,
New International Commentary on the New Testament by Paul Barnett,
New Testament Commentary by Simon J. Kistemaker, and Truth Commentary by Melvin Curry.

Form of 2 Corinthians:

The form and style of the letter are also a point of disagreement. The letter seems very disjointed and not a set of linear arguments. This has caused the majority of scholars to either deny Pauline authorship or deny the unity of the letter. Some see 2 Corinthians as simply a number of smaller letters and excerpts to the Corinthians patched together. Chapters 10-13 particularly are advocated to be an entirely different letter. However, there are a few ways to maintain the unity of 2 Corinthians and deal with the disjointed nature of the letter.

1) Paul wrote chapter 1-6 before Titus's arrival. Chapter 7 records his joy to the Corinthians' response to the "severe letter." Chapters 8-9 deal with finishing the collection of the needy saints of Jerusalem. Chapters 10-13 deal with Titus's report that there are some who are still attacking Paul.

2) Chapters 1-9 are addressed directly to the repentant majority of the Corinthians who have returned to Paul. The troublemakers are only indirectly mentioned. Chapters 10-13 are addressed directly to the rebellious minority of the Corinthians, while the repentant majority are only indirectly mentioned.

3) Paul is writing a "defense epistle," a type of Greek literature that is really a speech in his defense written in epistolary form. In a "defense epistle" the *exordium* raises the issues that will be developed, but in subtle ways, seeking the sympathetic attention of the audience (1:1-11). The *narrative* recounts the events leading to the court case whose decision is being contested (1:12-2:11). The *proof*, which is the heart of the speech, cites witnesses for the defense who refute the charge, introducing emotional arguments to arouse pity or character witnesses to support the probity of the accused (2:12-9:15). The concluding *peroration* is emotional in tone, geared to arouse anger at the injustice of the case (10-13).

2 CORINTHIANS

1

ESV

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. 11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

HCSB

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy our brother:

To God's church at Corinth, with all the saints who are throughout Achaia. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so our comfort overflows through Christ. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is experienced in the endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will share in the comfort.

8 For we don't want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that took place in the province of Asia: we were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life. 9 However, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and He will deliver us; we have placed our hope in Him that He will deliver us again. 11 And you can join in helping with prayer for us, so that thanks may be given by many on our behalf for the gift that came to us through [the prayers of] many.

1:1-11 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Observe how often Paul speaks of "comfort," "affliction," and "suffering."
2. What is Paul's point about his suffering and comfort and the Corinthians suffering and comfort? (1:3-7)

3. What event is Paul referring to when he says they thought they had “received the sentence of death?”

4. What did Paul learn from this trial?

ESV

1:12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. 13 For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and acknowledge and I hope you will fully acknowledge— 14 just as you did partially acknowledge us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

15 Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

HCSB

1:12 For our boast is this: the testimony of our conscience that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with God-given sincerity and purity, not by fleshly wisdom but by God’s grace. 13 Now we are writing you nothing other than what you can read and also understand. I hope you will understand completely— 14 as you have partially understood us—that we are your reason for pride, as you are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

15 In this confidence, I planned to come to you first, so you could have a double benefit, 16 and to go on to Macedonia with your help, then come to you again from Macedonia and be given a start by you on my journey to Judea. 17 So when I planned this, was I irresponsible? Or what I plan, do I plan in a purely human way so that I say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” [simultaneously]? 18 As God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes and no.” 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—did not become “Yes and no”; on the contrary, “Yes” has come about in Him. 20 For every one of God’s promises is “Yes” in Him. Therefore the “Amen” is also through Him for God’s glory through us. 21 Now the One who confirms us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God; 22 He has also sealed us and given us the Spirit as a down payment in our hearts.

1:12-22 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

5. What is Paul having to defend concerning his actions?

ESV

1:23 But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. 24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

2:1 For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? 3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. 4 For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

HCSB

1:23 I call on God as a witness against me: it was to spare you that I did not come to Corinth. 24 Not that we have control of your faith, but we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand by faith. 2:1 In fact, I made up my mind about this: not to come to you on another painful visit. 2 For if I cause you pain, then who will cheer me other than the one hurt? 3 I wrote this very thing so that when I came I wouldn't have pain from those who ought to give me joy, because I am confident about all of you that my joy is yours. 4 For out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart I wrote to you with many tears—not that you should be hurt, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.

1:23-2:4 Main point:
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Why did Paul not return to Corinth as planned?
2. What does Paul seem to try to help the Corinthians understand?

ESV

2:5 Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. 6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, 7 so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. 10 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

HCSB

2:5 If anyone has caused pain, he has not caused pain to me, but in some degree—not to exaggerate—to all of you. 6 The punishment by the majority is sufficient for such a person, 7 so now you should forgive and comfort him instead; otherwise, this one may be overwhelmed by excessive grief. 8 Therefore I urge you to confirm your love to him. 9 It was for this purpose I wrote: so I may know your proven character, if you are obedient in everything. 10 Now to whom you forgive anything, I do too. For what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for you in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his intentions.

2:5-11 Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

3. Speculate as to what sinner Paul is discussing.
4. What lessons do we learn from Paul's instructions concerning dealing with the sinner?

ESV

2:12 When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, 13 my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

HCSB

2:12 When I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, a door was opened to me by the Lord. 13 I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus, but I said good-bye to them and left for Macedonia.

14 But thanks be to God, who always puts us on display in Christ, and spreads through us in every place the scent of knowing Him. 15 For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To some we are a scent of death leading to death, but to others, a scent of life leading to life. And who is competent for this? 17 For we are not like the many who make a trade in God's message [for profit], but as those with sincerity, we speak in Christ, as from God and before God.

2:12-17 Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

5. Explain this vivid description in verse 14.
6. What contrast does Paul draw in verse 17? Why does he do this?

ESV

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 10 Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

HCSB

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or like some, do we need letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, recognized and read by everyone, 3 since it is plain that you are Christ's letter, produced by us, not written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tablets but on tablets that are hearts of flesh.

4 We have this kind of confidence toward God through Christ: 5 not that we are competent in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our competence is from God. 6 He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit produces life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look directly at Moses' face because of the glory from his face—a fading [glory]— 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness overflows with even more glory. 10 In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious in this case because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was fading away was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.

3:1-11 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What is Paul's point in the first four verses of chapter 3?
2. Explain: "For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."
3. What is the "ministry of death?" Why would it be called that? What is the "ministry of the Spirit?"
4. Why does the ministry of the Spirit have more glory?

ESV

4:1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

HCSB

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not give up. 2 Instead, we have renounced shameful secret things, not walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but in God's sight we commend ourselves to every person's conscience by an open display of the truth. 3 But if, in fact, our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 Regarding them: the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we are not proclaiming ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves because of Jesus. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness"—He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

4:1-6 Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Why does what we have learned cause us not to lose heart (vs. 1)?
2. Why is the gospel veiled to some in the world?
3. What does it mean that "God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?" (vs. 6)

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

4:7 Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. 8 We are pressured in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; 9 we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. 10 We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who live are always given over to death because of Jesus, so that Jesus' life may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith in accordance with what is written, I believed, therefore I spoke, we also believe, and therefore speak, 14 knowing that the One who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and present us with you. 15 For all this is because of you, so that grace, extended through more and more people, may cause thanksgiving to overflow to God's glory.

16 Therefore we do not give up; even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. 18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

4:7-18 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

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4. What are the "jars of clay" that Paul is referring to? (vs. 7) What does verse 7 teach us?
 5. Examine verse 10. What did Paul mean? What do we learn from this?
 6. How is the life of Jesus shown in our flesh (vs. 11)?
 7. As we see grace extended, what should that cause us to do (vs. 15)?
 8. What comfort does verses 16-18 give you during difficult times?

ESV

5:1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

HCSB

5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, a tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 And, in fact, we groan in this one, longing to put on our house from heaven, 3 since, when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 Indeed, we who are in this tent groan, burdened as we are, because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 And the One who prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. 6 Therefore, though we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight— 8 yet we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or bad.

5:1-10 Main point:
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What is the “tent” (vs. 1)? What hope do we have if our tent is destroyed?
2. What is the guarantee we have given us by the Spirit (vs. 5)?
3. Explain verses 6-7 and what it has to do with Paul’s point?
4. What is our goal in life (vs. 9)?
5. Who will appear before the judgment seat of Christ? What will happen in that judgment?

5:11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

5:11 Knowing, then, the fear of the Lord, we persuade people. We are completely open before God, and I hope we are completely open to your consciences as well. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may have a reply for those who take pride in the outward appearance rather than in the heart. 13 For if we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we have a sound mind, it is for you. 14 For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: if One died for all, then all died. 15 And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

16 From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him like that. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. 18 Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." 21 He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

5:11-21 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

6. Why do we persuade others (vs. 11)?
7. What lessons do we learn from verse 14?
8. What great joy do we find in verses 18-19?
9. How can we be ambassadors for Christ (vs. 20)?
10. Explain verse 21. How did God make Jesus to be sin? How can we become the righteousness of God?

2 CORINTHIANS

6

ESV

6:1 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 3 We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

HCSB

6:1 Working together with Him, we also appeal to you: “Don’t receive God’s grace in vain.”

2 For He says: In an acceptable time, I heard you, and in the day of salvation, I helped you. Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation.

3 We give no opportunity for stumbling to anyone, so that the ministry will not be blamed. 4 But in everything, as God’s ministers, we commend ourselves: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardship, by pressures, 5 by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, 6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the message of truth, by the power of God; through weapons of righteousness on the right hand and the left, 8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; as deceivers yet true; 9 as unknown yet recognized; as dying and look—we live; as being chastened yet not killed; 10 as grieving yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing yet possessing everything.

6:1-10 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. How can we “receive the grace of God in vain?” (vs. 1)
2. Apply verse 3 to your life.
3. Why does Paul commend himself and his companions as servants of God to the Corinthians with a long list of what they have done and what has happened to them?

ESV

6:11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. 13 In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

HCSB

6:11 We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide. 12 You are not limited by us, but you are limited by your own affections. 13 Now in like response—I speak as to children—you also should be open to us.

14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

16 And what agreement does God’s sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said: I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 17 Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you. 18 I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.

6:11-18 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

4. What is Paul trying to get the Corinthians to understand in verses 11-13?

5. Explain verse 14. What is Paul’s point in this letter and in its immediate context?

6. What does it mean that “we are the temple of the living God?” How should that change our lives?

ESV

7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

2 Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

HCSB

7:1 Therefore dear friends, since we have such promises, we should wash ourselves clean from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, making our sanctification complete in the fear of God.

2 Take us into your hearts. We have wronged no one, corrupted no one, defrauded no one. 3 I don't say this to condemn you, for I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I have great confidence in you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with encouragement; I am overcome with joy in all our afflictions.

5 In fact, when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. Instead, we were afflicted in every way: struggles on the outside, fears inside. 6 But God, who comforts the humble, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort he received from you. He announced to us your deep longing, your sorrow, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For although I grieved you with my letter, I do not regret it—even though I did regret it since I saw that the letter grieved you, though only for a little while. 9 Now I am rejoicing, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us.

7:1-9 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Because of these promises, what must we do? (vs. 1)

2. What is Paul trying to get the Corinthians to do in verses 2-9? What does he want the Corinthians to understand?

ESV

7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God.

13 Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. 15 And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you.

HCSB

7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance not to be regretted and leading to salvation, but worldly grief produces death. 11 For consider how much diligence this very thing—this grieving as God wills—has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you have commended yourselves to be pure in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did wrong, or because of the one who was wronged, but in order that your diligence for us might be made plain to you in the sight of God.

13 For this reason we have been comforted. In addition to our comfort, we were made to rejoice even more over the joy Titus had, because his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 14 For if I have made any boast to him about you, I have not been embarrassed; but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, so our boasting to Titus has also turned out to be the truth. 15 And his affection toward you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that I have complete confidence in you.

7:10-16 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

3. Explain what true repentance looks like.

4. What had godly grief produced in the Corinthians (vs. 11)? What do we learn from this?

5. Why is Paul and his companions comforted (vs. 13)?

6. What more does he want the Corinthians to grasp (vs. 14-16)?

ESV

8:1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. 7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

HCSB

8:1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: 2 during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity. 3 I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and beyond their ability, 4 they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, 5 and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will. 6 So we urged Titus that, just as he had begun, so he should also complete this grace to you. 7 Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—excel also in this grace.

8:1-7 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. What had the Macedonian Christians done? What lessons do we learn from this?
2. What were the Corinthians excelling in? What does Paul want the Corinthians to also excel in?
3. What can we do to excel in each of these areas?

ESV

8:8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 10 And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. 11 So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. 13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. 15 As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

HCSB

8:8 I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: although He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich. 10 Now I am giving an opinion on this because it is profitable for you, who a year ago began not only to do something but also to desire it. 11 But now finish the task as well, that just as there was eagerness to desire it, so there may also be a completion from what you have. 12 For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. 13 It is not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality— 14 at the present time your surplus is [available] for their need, so that their abundance may also become [available] for your need, that there may be equality.

15 As it has been written: The person who gathered much did not have too much, and the person who gathered little did not have too little.

8:8-15 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

4. Why does giving prove that our “love is genuine” (vs. 8)?

5. How is Jesus an example of this truth of giving (vs. 9)?

6. What principle is taught in verses 14-15?

2 CORINTHIANS

9

ESV

9:1 Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 4 Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

HCSB

9:1 Now concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. 2 For I know your eagerness, and I brag about you to the Macedonians: “Achaia has been prepared since last year,” and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I sent the brothers so our boasting about you in the matter would not prove empty, and so you would be prepared just as I said. 4 For if any Macedonians should come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to mention you, would be embarrassed in that situation. 5 Therefore I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift you promised, so that it will be ready as a gift and not an extortion.

9:1-5 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Why is it unnecessary for Paul to write to them about the ministry of the saints?
2. What is the example of the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia that Paul wants the Christians in Corinth to imitate?
3. What is Paul preparing for the Corinthians to do?
4. What lessons do we learn about how we ought to act and prepare as Christians?

9:6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. 15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

9:6 Remember this: the person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not out of regret or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.

9 As it is written: He has scattered; He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.

10 Now the One who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness, 11 as you are enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God. 13 Through the proof of this service, they will glorify God for your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with others. 14 And in their prayers for you they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing grace of God on you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

9:6-15 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

5. What is the point Paul wants the Corinthians to understand?
6. How are we supposed to give? Give examples and make applications.
7. What principles are taught in verses 10-11?
8. What else is going on when Christians supply the needs for other needy Christians? (vs. 12-15)

2 CORINTHIANS

10

ESV

10:1 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!— 2 I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

HCSB

10:1 Now I, Paul, make a personal appeal to you by the gentleness and graciousness of Christ—I who am humble among you in person, but bold toward you when absent. 2 I beg you that when I am present I will not need to be bold with the confidence by which I plan to challenge certain people who think we are walking in a fleshly way. 3 For although we are walking in the flesh, we do not wage war in a fleshly way, 4 since the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments 5 and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. 6 And we are ready to punish any disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

10:1-6 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Explain Paul's aside in verse 1 ("I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!"). Why does Paul say this?
2. Explain "the weapons of our warfare." (vs. 4)
3. How do we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God?
4. How do we take every thought captive to obey Christ?

ESV

11:1 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. 5 Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

HCSB

11:1 I wish you would put up with a little foolishness from me. Yes, do put up with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, because I have promised you in marriage to one husband—to present a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be corrupted from a complete and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you had not received, or a different gospel, which you had not accepted, you put up with it splendidly!

5 Now I consider myself in no way inferior to the “super-apostles.” 6 Though untrained in public speaking, I am certainly not [untrained] in knowledge. Indeed, we have always made that clear to you in everything. 7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by taking pay [from them] to minister to you. 9 When I was present with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. I have kept myself, and will keep myself, from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I don't love you? God knows I do!

11:1-11 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Write down the apparent criticisms the opponents of Paul had against him.

2. Explain Paul's defense in light of these criticisms.

11:12 And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

16 I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not with the Lord's authority but as a fool. 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. 19 For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

11:12 But I will continue to do what I am doing, in order to cut off the opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in what they are boasting about. 13 For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light. 15 So it is no great thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their destiny will be according to their works.

16 I repeat: no one should consider me a fool. But if [you do], at least accept me as a fool, so I too may boast a little. 17 What I say in this matter of boasting, I don't speak as the Lord would, but foolishly. 18 Since many boast from a human perspective, I will also boast. 19 For you gladly put up with fools since you are so smart! 20 In fact, you put up with it if someone enslaves you, if someone devours you, if someone captures you, if someone dominates you, or if someone hits you in the face. 21 I say this to [our] shame: we have been weak.

11:12-21a Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

3. Describe the deception of these opponents. What do we learn about the opposition and the weapons of our warfare?

4. How is Paul's "boasting" and "foolishness" an effort to contrast himself with his opponents?

5. Explain the sarcasm of verses 19-21.

11:21 But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

11:21 But in whatever anyone dares |to boast|—I am talking foolishly—I also dare:

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I'm talking like a madman—I'm a better one: with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, near death many times. 24 Five times I received from the Jews 40 lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the depths of the sea. 26 On frequent journeys, |I faced| dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the open country, dangers on the sea, and dangers among false brothers; 27 labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.

28 Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my care for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 30 If boasting is necessary, I will boast about my weaknesses. 31 The eternally blessed One, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, knows I am not lying. 32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to arrest me, 33 so I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

11:21b-33 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

6. Why does Paul recount his toils and suffering?

7. How does this speech function in defeating his opponents in Corinth?

ESV

12:1 I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. 7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

HCSB

12:1 It is necessary to boast; it is not helpful, but I will move on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who was caught up into the third heaven 14 years ago. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, I don't know; God knows. 3 I know that this man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 was caught up into paradise. He heard inexpressible words, which a man is not allowed to speak. 5 I will boast about this person, but not about myself, except of my weaknesses. 6 For if I want to boast, I will not be a fool, because I will be telling the truth. But I will spare you, so that no one can credit me with something beyond what he sees in me or hears from me, 7 especially because of the extraordinary revelations. Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me so I would not exalt myself. 8 Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times to take it away from me. 9 But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. 10 So because of Christ, I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in catastrophes, in persecutions, and in pressures. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

12:1-10 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

1. Explain this experience. What is the “third heaven?”
2. Why was Paul given a “thorn in the flesh?”
3. Explain the Lord's response in verse 9. What do we learn from this ?
4. How is all of this supposed to help Paul against his opponents?

12:11 I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. 13 For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

14 Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. 20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

12:11 I have become a fool; you forced it on me. I ought to have been recommended by you, since I am in no way inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. 12 The signs of an apostle were performed among you in all endurance—not only signs but also wonders and miracles. 13 So in what way were you treated worse than the other churches, except that I personally did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

14 Look! I am ready to come to you this third time. I will not burden you, for I am not seeking what is yours, but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 Now granted, I have not burdened you; yet sly as I am, I took you in by deceit! 17 Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent you? 18 I urged Titus [to come], and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Didn't we walk in the same spirit and in the same footsteps?

19 You have thought all along that we were defending ourselves to you. [No], in the sight of God we are speaking in Christ, and everything, dear friends, is for building you up. 20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I will not find you to be what I want, and I may not be found by you to be what you want; there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come my God will again humiliate me in your presence, and I will grieve for many who sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, sexual immorality, and promiscuity they practiced.

12:11-21 Main point:

Make additional notes at left and below:

5. What were the signs of a true apostle?
6. What does verse 14 have to do with Paul's point?
7. How does Titus also prove to be a defense of Paul?
8. What did Paul fear?

ESV

13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! 6 I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. 7 But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. 9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. 10 For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

HCSB

13:5 Test yourselves [to see] if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you not recognize for yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test. 6 And I hope you will recognize that we are not failing the test. 7 Now we pray to God that you do nothing wrong, not that we may appear to pass the test, but that you may do what is right, even though we [may appear] to fail. 8 For we are not able to do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. 9 In fact, we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray for this: your maturity. 10 This is why I am writing these things while absent, that when I am there I will not use severity, in keeping with the authority the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Be restored, be encouraged, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

13:5-14 Main point: _____
Make additional notes at left and below:

4. What are they to examine and test themselves concerning? How does one do this?

5. What is Paul’s prayer for the Corinthians? What lessons do we learn?

6. How is verse 8 a principle for Christian life? How can we keep this principle?

7. Why does Paul write such a difficult and hard letter?

8. What goals should the Corinthians aim for (vs. 11)?

2 CORINTHIANS



CHRIST OUR COMFORT IN TRIALS WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville